

Garfield Building

4612 Woodward Avenue

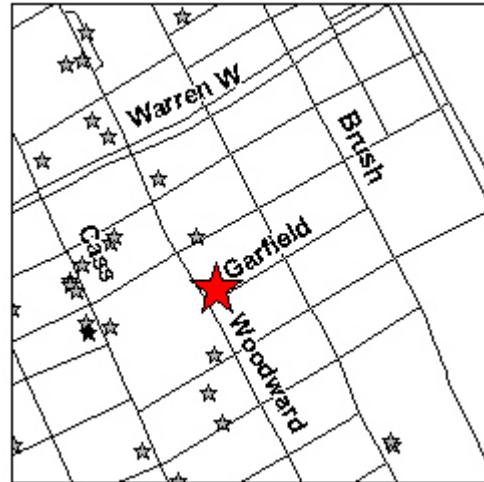
Previous Name: Edwin S. George Building

Local

State

State Marker

National ✓ 7/22/93



Garfield Building

Photo courtesy of Detroit News

Historic overview:

The Garfield Building is associated with the development of Woodward Avenue, Detroit's major thoroughfare, and the expansion of the City of Detroit into the automotive capital of the nation. The original owner, Edwin S. George, was an auto enthusiast, who by 1914 was known as the largest owner of Woodward frontage.

At the time when George began accumulating land on Woodward, it was considered to be far from the city center. In 1908, architect Albert Kahn constructed the Edwin S. George Building as a two-story building. The majority of its first tenants were involved in the auto industry as parts suppliers and manufacturer. The three upper stories were added in 1914, and the name of the building was referred to as the Garfield Building shortly thereafter. George was a director of the Board of Commerce and an advocate of the "good roads movement." He also helped found the Automobile Club of Detroit. George sold the building in 1942 to a property investment company. The Garfield Building became home to Wayne County Community College in the 1970s, and currently contains a drug store and loft style apartments.

The Garfield Building illustrates the breadth of architect Albert Kahn's practice. It shows that he designed not only large significant industrial and office buildings, but also modest commercial buildings. Additionally, it shows that he applied decorative finishes to essentially industrial buildings so they could be used in non-industrial settings. The Garfield Building is one of the last examples of early 20th century commercial architecture on Woodward in Detroit's Cultural Center.